

Testimony in OPPOSITION to SB830
AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF CERTAIN
OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNACES

We have operated our wood burning furnace in compliance with regulations and with consideration of our neighbors. We have had no complaints from our neighbors regarding its usage. When people come to visit, many don't even know we have an outdoor furnace until we show them. My husband enjoys being out on a beautiful crisp Connecticut Fall day cutting down the trees he uses to keep us warm in our home. He learned this valuable skill from his father and my hope is he will pass it down to our son.

Heating with wood is a natural, cost effective way for people to heat their home. An article by Hamilton E. Davis in Northern Woodlands says "Burning wood for fuel is sustainable because wood, unlike coal or oil, is a renewable resource. Replacing those fuels with wood reduces the user's "carbon footprint" and thereby decreases global warming. And these boilers can be made to burn cleanly. Some producers have developed boilers with drastically reduced emissions and increased burning efficiencies."

If you look at the map on the Environment and Human Health, Inc (EHHI) website showing the number of complaints by location, you can see that the majority of the complaints are isolated, listing only one or two complaints. Are you really considering restricting the freedom of 3.5 million Connecticut residents because .03% (less than 1/2 of one percent) of the people don't like their neighbor's choice. You can also see on the map where there are multiple complaints in one area. Wouldn't it be wiser to enforce the regulations that are in place, focus on the abusers and bring them into compliance rather than take away the freedom to choose how you heat your house?

I am concerned about the proposal that adds "wood smoke" to the Public Health Nuisance Code. My understanding is that this addition would include indoor stoves, outdoor firepits, chimineas and probably outdoor pizza ovens. So, if you don't invite your neighbor to your pizza party, you may have the police show up and tell you to put out the fire and no more pizza for you.

In March of 2006, Environment and Human Health, Inc. a Connecticut organization made up of nine members, put out a ground-breaking report on the harmful effects of vehicle exhaust stating "Vehicle exhaust is the largest contributor to our state's air pollution problems". Nancy Alderman states "Many of the chemicals in vehicle exhaust are carcinogenic and yet we are exposed to them each and every day." EHHI also informs us that "Some of the illnesses exacerbated by air pollution are asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and respiratory illnesses." These are medical conditions similar to the illnesses EHHI claims are exacerbated as a result of wood smoke.

Why hasn't EHHI put forth a proposal to ban the use of automobiles? The lead author of this report helps to answer this question in part by stating "we have all grown to accept the smell of engine exhaust as part of everyday life." This does not negate, however, that vehicle exhaust is the largest contributor to our state's air pollution problems and the associated illnesses. So why doesn't EHHI seek to ban automobile usage? I suspect because, in part, they prefer to drive their cars, rather than ride a bike, to work. Since none of them likely own or operate a wood burning furnace, they can push for this ban without recognizing the hardship it will place on those of us that do.

It has already been established that oil/gas heating options are cost prohibitive for farmers. This is true for homeowners as well. If we are forced to switch to gas or oil heat our monthly heating bill will double or possibly triple during some months. What reimbursements for equipment that has been legally purchased and operated are you willing to include in this bill? What energy assistance will you offer to cover the cost difference and the financial hardship you will place us?

I urge you to oppose SB 830.
Thank you for your consideration.

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